

## LESSON 8: THE EFFECTS OF INCOME INEQUALITY

### Lesson aim:

- To explain the meaning of poverty and highlight different types of poverty.
- To identify the underlying causes of poverty and highlight possible strategies and solutions.

### Learning objectives:

- At the end of this lesson students will be able to:
- understand and explain what poverty means to them and to society; and
  - differentiate between different types of poverty.

### Lesson outline:

First write the word 'home' on the board and ask students to provide words associated with it. Next write the word 'poverty' on the board and ask students what they think the word means. Ask them then, individually, to list what other words, concepts, ideas and opinions they might associate with this word.

When students have completed their list, write some of their contributions on the board for further discussions.

Now ask the class: What else do you think defines poverty? What other characteristics describe poverty? Can you tell if someone is poor? If so, how? Do you think people are treated differently if they are considered poor? Why do you think this happens?

Then ask students to reconsider the word 'home', in light of their discussions on poverty? Has it made a difference? If so, what are they?

Read through the information in the poverty section with students explaining that there are different types of poverty and different ways to measure it. It is also not always obvious, as some people prefer to hide their financial struggles. However, whilst poverty comes in many forms it is important to impart to them that it is the purpose of government and civil society to ensure poverty is completely eradicated in all its forms.

### In-class activity: Discussion

Teachers should now provide some of the definitions of poverty listed in this module. Encourage students to discuss the definitions by asking questions such as:

- What is your first reaction to these definitions? What do you think of these definitions?
- Are they accurate do you think? Have you ever thought of these issues before?
- Why do you think people hide their money problems from friends and family?
- Working in groups, ask each group to discuss their own thoughts on poverty and what definition they would agree with. Each group should elect a spokesperson to report back to the class on their discussions, the definition they agreed on and why they chose that one.

### Student exercise: The rights of children

In 1992 the Irish state ratified the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child, committing itself to promote, protect and fulfil the rights of children in Ireland.

Provide a copy of the Convention (downloadable from [www.childrensrights.ie](http://www.childrensrights.ie)) to students for discussion. Ask them which articles might be breached when children live in poverty.

Almost every country of the world has ratified the convention except Somalia and the US. Discuss with students the reasons why a country might not wish to ratify such a convention. What might this say about the value different countries place on their child citizens?

### Optional activity: Class debate

According to the author of 'Economics for Everyone', Jim Stanford says "limiting the economic distance between rich and poor is an important economic goal".

Ask students to think about this quote and write down a few points about it. Then divide the class into groups to work on the pro and con sides. At a later date a class debate could be arranged.